829 57 602

The genetic connections of those who did not help in cash, or labor at, say, cremations or cooperative work-parties were forgotten. Degree of help was a measure of kinship solidarity, and even marked the outer boundaries of kinship.

844 829 57 [842]

The word "help" turned up over and over again in the context of childbirth. Birth came about because a married couple, already steeped in the knowledge that they had been so helped by their parents, "helped another individual to new life" through the mingling of semen and blood. The midwife's role was merely to "help." When a woman engaged a midwife, her words were, "Will you come to help me?" A baby having trouble breathing right after delivery "had to be helped for half an hour." Most important, only through the reciprocal help of mother and child was rebirth to earthly life implemented at all. Parturition was an active, cooperative venture between 2 autonomous beings. The child set the time for labor to start by "deciding to be born" when his 32 parts were "complete,"[38] and he had worked off sufficient sin in purgatory to permit rebirth. The mother by her labor "helped the child to be born," but she could not succeed unless he actively "helped," too. Though other assistance to her was desirable, such as persons to support her back and press out the infant, only his help was essential. Without it she had a hard or unsuccessful labor. A woman who gave birth successfully without outside help created no stir because it was evident that the baby had been helpful.

844 [826]

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38. Informants were not uniform in opinion here. Some said the khwan (or winyan) was the first "part" to establish itself--arriving at the moment of conception--others that it was the last (Textor:262). In either case it was highly volatile during pregnancy, and the trapping by winnowing at birth was the major means of rooting it in the person. During pregnancy, medicine for wind in the fetus was given "which was not effective if there were no khwan," but whether the khwan was the mother's or the child's was not certain.

794 84 [115] [826]

greater, for relatives were at hand. Some of these ordinary persons developed skills of considerable consequence. 844

If difficulties developed, then a more experienced person, perferably a midwife, was needed. But many a midwife assisted at normal births. Because difficulties might arise from a deficiency of merit either in the mother or the child (one could never know which), many women preferred to have in attendance, for peace of mind, either a midwife or an experienced person to insure the presence of expert help. Sometimes they were engaged in advance, more often just sent for "as pain is increasing," it being not always certain whether the case was normal or not. 844 759

A few women were delivered at the Mīnburī Health Center. These were rarely normal cases. The Center was turned to as a last resort in dire circumstances, with the result that sometimes the woman died in the boat on the way. A few persons of rather more modern outlook, such as wealthy farmers, teachers, and traders, had been delivered there and recognized its usefulness. 844 [845] [847]

The midwives lived in all parts of the community, with 3 in the populous central temple area. No one was more than a half-hour's paddle, or an hour's walk from the home of some midwife. What was desired, however, was a particular person, even though he might not be the most accessible one. 759

Since midwives were all heads of large families their clientele was mostly their kinsmen. They also took care of non-kin who lived in their locality. A daughter or other close relative who had married out would be attended wherever she was, if she did not return home for confinement. 759 571 602

In choosing a midwife, a parturient sought out not only skill but favored a kinsman over a non-kinsman, a close relative over a distant one, a near person over a far.[63] Occasionally, to sustain an image of progressiveness, social superiority or of wealth display, a midwife from outside Bang Chan was imported. Sometimes proximity, convenience, and

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63. A male and 2 female kinsmen-midwives were called by the man's sister to deliver her, and all came. He did not deliver her because she was "too close a relative," but he said a brother "could deliver a sister."

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[184]

affection overrode kinship.[64] Thus affinal relatives and non-kin neighbors were also requested to assist. Buddhists attended Muslims and vice-versa, (though Muslim women preferred female assistance).

[609]

In emergencies the professional midwives' area was the whole community. They travelled long distances to attend women who were not close kin. No parturient, however, even in an emergency, was ever attended by a complete stranger. In all likelihood, every adult in the community knew the midwives at least by sight.

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As to the size of the practices, reported activities ranged from the Muslim midwife's estimate of 10 per year, down to 2 or 3 per year.[65] The 2 men and the most competent female midwife reported about 4 per year, a figure probably weighted on the side of the difficult cases per year. It is noteworthy that the men, in spite of being as we shall see both mǒ and midwife, did not have larger practices than the women. It was considered basically a woman's skill.

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None of the midwives derived much income from their practices, nor did they expect it to be significant. Their main income came from rice-growing from which, however, the women and one of the males had largely retired because of age. The other male midwife was exceptionally busy as a labor contractor, builder of houses, land-owner. and headman as well. The midwives found the 5 to 30 baht offered

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64. Two teachers who were in the kinship category of granddaughter (lān) to the 3 best midwives, and lived only a few hundred yards from them, were delivered by a woman who was mother-in-law to one and husband's older sister to the other and who was "not a midwife but knows how." Since labor was quick and normal, no higher help was necessary. On the other hand, all 3 of these midwives turned up to help at the confinement of another cherished "granddaughter." Only one of them actually delivered the infant but other functions were diplomatically divided up by the young mother.

65. Hauck studied 46 babies, aged up to 3 and so not all born in one year. Thirty-one were delivered by 4 of the professional female midwives (12,9,7,3 respectively); a male midwife and an "experienced" person had done 2 each; 11 women, one each (Hauck, 1959:61). A few of the latter 11 were ordinary kin, not midwives.

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established midwife who was a "close relative."

Sometimes the interest arose in young people. A girl started at 15 to accompany her mother, a midwife, as helper and delivered her first case alone (an emergency) at 20. A boy of 15 also helped his mother's sister, who was a midwife. Later, when married, he delivered some of his own children, but denied that he ever intended to take up the calling. One young man in his 30's, was seen going "as a team" with a well known old mɔ̄ who directed him in the manual operations but who did not ever touch the woman himself. He also assisted one of the female midwives, but had not yet delivered a baby alone.

759 57 602.

The first child delivered by anyone was always the child of a close kin. Only with success at this first delivery would a person even consider doing it again. The second case, and the next few were confined to the potential midwife's close relatives, children (lūk), grandchildren, and the children of siblings (lān). Thus, the skills were validated within the kin circle before a midwife felt ready to practice outside.[69]

With success, a person of developing skill might be willing to include non-kin in his clientele, i.e. become a professional. One resolved only to help relatives but her "fame spread." As another said, "seeing it was safe, I was encouraged to go on." By this time, magical formulae had been

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69. Daughters-in-law were within the validating circle if circumstances were "convenient"--i.e. if their own mothers did not deliver them and if they lived with their husband's people. No witchcraft was feared between women. A mɔ̄ in his specialty also had to validate his skills within his close kindred before non-kin would call on him. A reputation began at home.

[606] [764] [756]

759 sought, ritually requested of some relative who was a mid-
571 wife.[70] Some persons though continued to limit themselves
602 to delivering their relatives, and never sought magic at all.

Two Worlds: The Natural and the Supernatural

759 To deliver a baby as a midwife or even as an unskill-
772 ed kinsman, embraced 2 aspects: a manual or technical, and a magical. These aspects corresponded to Bang Chan's 2 great worlds of knowledge and experience: the natural and the supernatural.

Midwifery was not alone in embracing both of these categories. Every activity, bus-driving, dancing, printing, or other, had its incorporated magical means to augment the probability of success. Though with the manual or technical skills of the natural world alone one could come through all right with even a modicum of supernatural help, success was greater. No one wanted to take the responsibility and risks of "going it alone" especially when the resources of the supernatural world were so freely and easily accessible to everyone. At the very least, one could start an enterprise on Friday (Wan Suk: Happy Day). The closer an enterprise was to the margin of life and death, however, the larger the supernatural element. In farming, curing, and midwifery, for instance, the ritual component was strong.

[874] Since these 2 worlds were qualitatively different, each required a different method of learning. The supernatural world, immaterial, royal and sacred, was learned

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[789] 70. Three women had recieved theirs from their mother, mother's mother, and mother's older brother, respectively. A retired midwife planned to give hers "to the daughter or grandchild ("lan":sex not specified) who was interested enough to ask for it." One man had received his from his father's father. Childbirth magic would hardly be a suitable topic of conversation between priests, but it might have been passed down there, too. The midwife whom one accompanied while learning probably was the source of one's magic. Women's magic was passed down the maternal line only, whereas men could get theirs both from kinsmen and at the temple.

had 2 to 4 children. In each case, the information obtained related to the most recent delivery.

Delivery. - In Bang Chan delivery usually took place at home. Four of the mothers we interviewed went to the home of a relative or relative-in-law. In two of these instances the relative was also the midwife; in the others the mother was apparently seeking a place where she could be more satisfactorily looked after than at home.

Three women went to the Health Center at Minburi, about 3 miles from the center of the Bang Chan community, to have their babies. Two of these mothers expected to be delivered at home but were taken to the Health Center when labor proved long. All 3 returned home either on the day of delivery or the next day and lay by the fire. Two others, both school teachers, told us in advance that they expected or hoped to go to the Health Center, but when labor began they were unable to do so because their babies came so quickly. Aside from the 3 who went to the Minburi Health Center, only one of those interviewed went outside the community to have her baby. Informants usually considered the delivery uncomplicated; although, as noted, some labors were long.

Traditional midwives, who were not professionally trained but had learned from other traditional midwives before them, attended most of the mothers. One woman who was alone delivered the baby herself, one said she had no midwife but did not specify other help, and 2 had the help of women who did not ordinarily practice midwifery. The 3 women who were delivered at the Health Center had professionally trained help. Obstetrics as practiced in Bang Chan has been described by Hanks (1959).

Care of Mother During Postpartum Rest Period. - Traditional behavior during the postpartum rest period has been described by Hanks (1959).

Lying by the fire. - The ancient custom of (2)juu (1)faj[1] (literally to be by the fire) after childbirth was still observed by most women in Bang Chan. The chief difference between the practice as we observed it and as it was described in the Bangkok Calendar[2] for 1865 was in the length of the period. In former times this was as much as a month after the birth of the first child, with shorter periods for successive

1. See Appendix, p. 51 for glossary of Thai terms.

2. The unsigned article entitled "Siamese Obstetrics" was presumably written by the Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D., a Protestant missionary who compiled the Calendar.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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fictive terms is of course sometimes prompted by nothing more than the desire to be polite, but equally often it symbolizes genuine feelings of affection and obligation not too different from what the terms imply when they are used in their original kinship context. Bang Chaners have a wonderfully convenient term, *phyan-yaad*, a compound meaning literally "family friends," which is used to refer both to friends to whom ego feels so close that he considers them members of his family and to individuals whom he considers his friends *because* they are members of his family. The particular persons to whom this term, as well as those noted above, is applied vary widely from informant to informant (expectedly so because they are non-institutionalized terms). However, the point to be emphasized is that for all villagers kinship provides a basic referential mechanism for expressing the degree of psychological affiliation that they feel toward other human beings.

An *awareness* of degrees of psychological affiliation and obligation and of the modes for expressing such sentiments are very much a part of village life. For with the exception of the five institutions mentioned above, most Bang Chaners, as I have noted elsewhere (Sharp *et al.* 1956: 241), are really not obliged—and do not feel obliged—to be beholden to anyone but themselves. In a very real sense, the village is comprised of 1,771 individualists whose major goals in life are to obtain sufficient land to support themselves, their growing children, and their religion, free from physical insecurities and unencumbered by entangling social obligations. When they enter into relationships with other people they do so with an awareness that they are always acting of their own free will.

Despite the conventions of ethnographic reporting, it is difficult to delimit the precise nature of the nuclear family in Bang Chan. The nuclear family clearly is the ideal for all villagers, but because Bang Chaners are just as responsive to convenience as they are to custom, there is considerable variation regarding this ideal. In his study of the economy of the village, Janlekha (1955) found it necessary to distinguish five different kinds of functioning, mutually exclusive household units in Bang Chan: the typical nuclear family (59.4 percent of all households); a limited extended family, consisting of a man, wife, either or both their sets of parents, and unmarried children (8.1 percent); an extended family, consisting of the limited extended family plus married children, the latters' children, and any collateral relatives of any generation (26.8 percent); a one-person family (5.4 percent); and the ecclesiastical "family," consisting of the order of Buddhist monks, the only truly corporate group in the village (0.3 percent). (These variations of the nuclear family, all localized groups, should of course not be confused with what I, following Sharp [1957], have been calling the kindred, with what Kaufman [1960] refers to as spatially and

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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"extended families." The aim of all Bang Chan families even then was to attain a position in which they would be free from such obligations or would have other families dependent upon them.

In the intervening years the influx of new families into Bang Chan, the increased self-sufficiency of the individual nuclear families and, most important, the increased acceptance of commercial values, have served to break down kindred groups so that today few kinsmen work their fields together and even fewer share their food or equipment with one another, beyond what has been noted above. Perhaps the only remaining *universally* practiced function of the old kindred groups is the celebration of ceremonials involving members of the family, particularly cremations and ordinations, the cost and merit of which are shared among the participants, depending upon their wealth. Very often people do not want to borrow from or lend money or equipment to kinsmen precisely because the intrusion of the kinship tie makes the collection of such debts doubly awkward ("relatives take twice as long in repaying money; I do not want to lend anything to them"). However, the old forms have not been completely obliterated and when necessity requires or personal convenience moves an individual to look to others, the traditions of extended kinship, as indicated earlier, may be invoked.

For purposes of conceptual convenience, two types of kindred may be specified: the kind referred to above which involves kinsmen living in the village and to which Kaufman (1960) gives the name "spatially extended family"; and the type descriptive of relatives living outside Bang Chan, dispersed throughout other villages and provinces or in Bangkok, and called by Kaufman "the remotely extended family" and by L. M. Hanks (1959c) "the multi-local extended family." These terms are of course generic labels descriptive of actual or potential relationships between individuals, not of specifically delimited groups. Sometimes Bang Chaners attempt to extend the definition of the latter type of relationship to individuals who have never heard of them, but who may be in a position to help their son obtain a job in the city or get him admitted into a vocational school. Hanks has shown how the multi-local extended family has to a limited extent in recent years rejuvenated extended kinship ties by becoming the major institutional mechanism through which villagers leave Bang Chan to seek their fortunes elsewhere. (This last phrase is not merely a figure of speech; many young Bang Chan men have what could be called almost a Dick Whittington view about leaving Bang Chan for Bangkok.) A cousin who undertakes to serve as a villager's liaison to a city job or who offers him a place to stay usually does so willingly, for it creates obligations which may be called upon later if need be.

The above description of variations and extensions has been presented

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harvest time, serve to create a rite of intensification as family members decide together what work will be done by whom, arise early in the morning to work together happily in the fields—sometimes for as long as fourteen hours at a stretch—and actually see the fruits of their coöperative labor mount up on the threshing floors. The sense of familial solidarity and intradependence, and its associated feelings of love, is experienced by all.[10] Also, since harvesting more often than not involves working reciprocally with other families, the host of a reciprocal labor group giving a feast whenever possible at the end of the day, it serves, although to a lesser extent, to intensify feelings of membership in the larger community.

Summary

In my discussion of the "cultural background," I have dwelt primarily on kinship because the family is functionally the most significant social unit in the village and because it is within the context of kinship that personality is developed and, in Bang Chan, most frequently expressed. None of this is meant to imply a lack of importance for other social units—the monastery, the school, the state—or for the non-institutionalized relationships—friends, drinking partners, and business contacts. However, kinship does provide the basic psychological model for all human relationships in Bang Chan,

[10] Although the annual cycle of Thai peasants is described in detail in the available ethnographies on Thai rural life (deYoung 1955, Fraser 1960, Kaufman 1960, Kingshill 1960, Sharp *et al.* 1953) a few words should be added about the psychological dimensions of this cycle. Thus familial solidarity, intradependence, and love are not the only sentiments that are heightened during the harvest period. Perhaps the most striking quality of this season (December to January) is the increase in the optimism, joy, and general psychic well-being of the villagers: people laugh more loudly than usual; they relish telling about the things they are going to buy; parents take more kindly to the gallivanting of the children. These months contrast with transplanting time (late July to early August) and the period prior to harvest (October to November), when an oversabundance of rain can destroy the villagers' rice seedlings or their entire crop. These latter periods are marked not so much by anxiety as by a sense of watchful waiting. All these contrast with the Dry season when things are especially quiet in Bang Chan and when villagers spend their time repairing farming equipment and houses, gossiping, or are working on jobs outside the community. Villagers say that of the three major seasons of the year (Dry, February to June; Rainy, June to January; Cold, January to February) they like the Rainy season best. The season coincides with the rice-growing cycle, is marked by Buddhist Lent and, excepting a final week of Monsoon downpour, is in fact the most comfortable period of the year.

These seasonal activities and attitudes also have direct implications for field work. Thus, while villagers gave freely of their time during the dry season and after the harvest, and during the latter were especially outgoing and benign, many simply would not see me during the weeks of planting and harvesting. The benign attitudes of villagers interviewed after the harvest were reflected directly in the data, as were the noncommittal responses of some villagers who were interviewed during transplanting time.

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596 and not only in the abstract, symbolic sense. Non-kin are approached in the
• 602 hope that they eventually may be treated as kin; good government officials
*156 are unabashedly described as being like "good fathers"; the basic patterns of
[609] respect that are learned and practiced in the family are extended to relationships outside of it, although inevitably in more formal ways. There is no *rigid* psychological cleavage between the sentiments of kinship and the
596 sentiments about individuals outside of the family. Conversely the mere
602 fact of kinship does not assure that individuals will be given special
609 emotional treatment: often the love between friends is greater than the love
*156 between kin (see the case of "Dang," his father, and father's friends in
[592] Hanks and Phillips 1961, or the case cited earlier of the man who left his wife because of his fondness for an employer). Kinship represents to the villager relationships of warmth, familiarity, and conviviality, but also unpredictability and undependability. Such is the nature of most human contact in Bang Chan.

621 In this type of cultural situation, one does not find arising the type of
596 community power struggles or schisms apparently characteristic of many
[662] peasant communities (see Foster 1960–61). Bang Chan is indeed a placid community because no family has the organizational means or the quality of familial cohesiveness necessary to assume a dominant social, political, or
*[156] economic position. Individuals assume important positions and individuals disagree and squabble, but rarely families. In surveying the cultural landscape of Bang Chan, I often wondered whether the basic unit of anthropological and sociological, as well as psychological, analyses was perhaps not the individual rather than the family, monastery, school, or village itself.

60

125 64.a. IF YES: At what age did he leave BC?

[166]	1. Below 15 years	8
	2. 15 to 19 years	28
	3. 20 to 29 years	50
[592]	4. 30 years or more	5
	5. Unascertainable	6

d. IF YES: For how long has he (she, they) been gone from BC?

	6. Less than one year	12
	7. 1 to 4	42
	8. 5 to 9	19
	9. 10 years or more	19
	X. Unascertainable	

[464] e. IF YES: What various duties or jobs does he (she, they) do in
[463] Bangkok?

	1. Housewife	17
	2. Unskilled laborer	19
	3. Skilled laborer	33
	Armed forces	17
	Service	9
	Employee	5
	4. Other (retired, selling things)	2
	5. Unascertainable	4

[166] f. IF YES: During the last year, have you seen this person(s)
[593] several times, once, or not at all?
[602]

	9. Several times	65
	X. Once	16
	Y. Not at all	8
	O. Unascertainable	3

g. IF YES: Does he (she, they) make regular remittances to this house?

	X. Yes	31
	Y. No	56
	O. Unascertainable	5

[207] 65. Do you listen to the radio regularly, daily, occasionally, seldom, or never?

	6. Regularly-daily	45
	7. Occasionally	66
	8. Seldom	148
	9. Never	60
	— Unascertainable	14

[525] 66.a. Do you play the lottery regularly, occasionally, seldom, or never?

	1. Regularly	20
	2. Occasionally	54
	3. Seldom	220
	4. Never	38
	5. Unascertainable	—
	— No Answer	1

b. IF REGULARLY, OCCASIONALLY, OR SELDOM: Suppose you were to win the second prize of 10,000 baht. What various things would you do with this money?
(See code)

592 Bangchan is thus not a counterpart of the Indian or Chinese
596 extended family and should not be conceived as such. Its
621 outlook is definitely that of the nuclear family. Its assumption of an extended family structure does not indicate an intended role of the conventional extended family but does rather demonstrate the inability, temporarily at least, to provide for an establishment of a new family for the newly
[511] wed members. Most of the 80 'extended' families existing in Bangchan at the time of the second census in 1953 cannot be regarded as well to do, and some are extremely poor, being families of the laboring group without any assured regular income.

592 All of the sixteen one-man families were poor, rang-
621 ing from destitute old people who had been deserted by their kin to small farm operators who had to make the most out of their under-sized farms.

592 There were some 53 dependent relatives staying with
602 twenty-five families. These relatives do not include parents
621 of family heads and family heads' direct descendants and
[597] their spouses. They also do not include 'adopted' children of family heads, who automatically become members of the family. Records show that most dependent relatives remained in the family only for a brief period of time. Seven relatives, however, were able during the period from 1949 to 1953 to assume the headship of the families of which they had been dependent members.[7]

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7. See section on change of family heads, Chapter II.